

Approved For Release 2008/10/31 : CIA-RDP86M00886R002000100003-9

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Executive Secretary
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Executive Registry

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FEDERAL EXECUTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

15535 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE • SILVER SPRING, MD 20904 • (301)384-2616

December 28, 1984

Dear Agency Head:

The Federal Executive and Professional Association is proud to have been a working member of the Federal Executive Association's Task Force which developed an Action Plan for improving the working relationship of political and career executives in 1985 and beyond. We have enclosed for your information the action plan that we submitted to the President and Mr. Mondale before the election.

We believe that the plan contains valuable insights and suggestions that non-career and career employees can use to improve the effectiveness of their relationships and in turn effective implementation of the Administration's programs.

Respectfully Yours,



Elvin W. Sill,
President

EWS/kff

Enclosure

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FEDERAL EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATIONS TASK FORCE
FOR IMPROVED POLITICAL-CAREER RELATIONS

Washington, D.C.
September 20, 1984

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

Our four professional associations are submitting to you and to Mr. Mondale, the Democratic presidential candidate, the enclosed Action Plan for improving the working relationship of political and career executives in 1985 and beyond.

For the past ten months, the officers of our associations have worked together to produce this five-step plan for addressing the problem of how to develop more constructive and supportive relations between new political appointees and their senior career staff members. We were encouraged in this endeavor by officials in your Administration and others involved in the various political-career orientation programs conducted in the past two years.

We are very pleased to know that your Administration would expect to continue efforts, early in 1985, to develop more effective political-career executive relations. We believe that our five-step Action Plan represents a substantial contribution towards the design of such a comprehensive and meaningful program.

We are therefore submitting our plan for your consideration and endorsement as we know that, to be truly effective, the program must be conducted under the auspices of the White House.

Respectfully yours,

S/
Bradley H. Patterson, Jr., President
American Society for
Public Administration

S/
Eileen Siedman, President
Federal Executive Institute
Alumni Association

S/
Elvin W. Silk, President
Federal Executive and
Professional Association

S/
David Burckman, President
Senior Executives Association

S/
Paul Lorentzen
Task Force Leader
5101 Wetheresville Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

FEDERAL EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATIONS TASK FORCE
FOR IMPROVED POLITICAL-CAREER RELATIONS

Washington, D.C.
September 20, 1984

Honorable Walter F. Mondale
2550 M. Street, N.W. (Suite 500)
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Mr. Mondale:


Our four professional associations are submitting to you and to Mr. Reagan, the Republican presidential candidate, the enclosed Action Plan for improving the working relationship of political and career executives in 1985 and beyond.


For the past ten months, the officers of our associations have worked together to produce this five-step plan for addressing the problem of how to develop more constructive and supportive relations between new political appointees and their senior career staff members. We were encouraged in this endeavor by many persons involved in past and present programs of this type.


We believe that our five-step Action Plan represents a substantial contribution towards the design of a more comprehensive and meaningful program to help solve the long-standing and inherent problems in the political-career executive relationship.

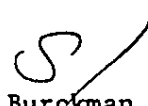
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Paul Lorentzen
Task Force Leader
5101 Wethersville Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21207

POLITICAL-CAREER RELATIONS

ACTION PLAN

September 1984

Prepared jointly by:

American Society for Public Administration

Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association

Federal Executive and Professional Association

Senior Executives Association

Presented to:

The Democratic and the Republican candidates

for the Presidency of the United States --

for endorsement and implementation after

the November 1984 presidential election

Political-Career Relations

ACTION PLAN

Objectives

The objective of this Action Plan is to ensure that a comprehensive and effective program is implemented by the White House early in 1985, to help new non-career appointees and their senior career staff members in promptly establishing a supportive and cooperative working relationship.

Experience has repeatedly shown that absent such a conscious and planned orientation and communication effort to address initial apprehension and stress on both sides, political and career executives too often do not develop that cooperative relationship required for effective implementation of the Administration's program objectives.

Fundamental Principles

This Action Plan is based upon the following fundamental tenets of the American form of national government:

- The unique resources and contributions of both political and career executives are needed.
- The effective working relationship between political and career executives depends upon the establishment of mutual understanding and reciprocal support.
- Such understanding and support will develop where:
 - . Political executives solicit careerists' advice in an open communications atmosphere; and
 - . Career executives respect privileged information and help implement political leaders' decisions.
- The President is ultimately responsible for ensuring that actions are taken to assist political and career executives in establishing the desired cooperative relationship.

Chronological Steps

1. White House-sponsored general orientation conducted for new non-career appointees
2. Department/agency briefings held to foster political-career communications
3. Political-career relations workshops conducted to build mutual understanding of roles and perspectives

-2-

4. Guidance provided for career executives (whenever political executives change)
5. Agency "alternative opinion channels" developed to encourage constructively critical policy ideas.

Introduction

Effective operations in the Executive branch of our form of national government depends to a large extent on a smooth working relationship between the political appointees and the career executives. The former are to provide the political leadership which ensures that current government policy reflects the public will democratically expressed through the political party and electoral processes; while the latter are to facilitate such policy implementation by providing expertise and institutional knowledge in turning policies into programs.

Given our historical development and governmental structure, it is natural for the relationship between political and career executives to be characterized by an element of tension and stress. It is neither possible nor desirable to eliminate this vibrant situation, which is accompanied by the benefits of periodic re-appraisal, re-energizing, and general re-dedication. Without the stimulus provided by the political element, entropy might prevail in the bureaucratic arena.

However, this potentially useful stress at the political-career interface too often has the character more of destructive conflict than of productive tension. To turn this situation around, we are asking the President to endorse and ensure the implementation of an Action Plan which contains practical and common-sensical remedial steps:

- All new political executives need the benefit of a comprehensive orientation to the complex environment of the federal government, promptly after their appointment.
- In every Department/agency, political and career executives starting to work together need to be provided an early opportunity to begin communicating openly so that:
 - . the career executives are informed by the political leadership of new policy directions and goals; and
 - . the political executives receive the benefit of candid facts and expert views based on the institutional memory of the career executives.
- New political appointees and senior careerists need to be placed in a workshop environment free from hierarchical and peer concerns, to start developing mutual understanding and respect by sharing their images and perspectives and by engaging in joint problem solving.
- Career executives need to be given guidance and counsel regarding how to prepare themselves for effectively working with and supporting new political appointees.
- Departments/agencies need to establish mechanisms for encouraging and tapping constructively critical alternative ideas during the policy-making process.

STEP 1

White House-Sponsored General Orientation
for New Non-Career Appointees

Objective

The objective of Step 1 is to help new political appointees to start operating, promptly and effectively, in the complex environment of the federal government by minimizing unnecessary mistakes and frictions--between political executives and the Congress, the White House, the press, and especially with career executives of their agencies.

Method

A continuing series of White House-sponsored orientation sessions are to be conducted, to cover new senior non-career appointees (GS-16 and up, non-career SES officers, Assistant Secretaries and equivalent) in groupings as appointments are made.

Recommended Features

Convenor: A member of the White House staff charged with this specific responsibility.

Briefers: Members of the White House and OMB staffs, aided by past and present senior government officials and members of such non-profit institutions as the National Academy of Public Administration.

Place: The Theater, East Wing, The White House. A social reception in the White House or its Garden would be a desirable additional feature of the program.

Time: A minimum of two days for each orientation group, with sessions scheduled during the entire term of the Administration so that new appointees attend within 2-3 weeks of appointment.

Subject Coverage:

1. The environment of federal decision-making

- Dispersion of power among Congress, the Courts, and the Executive
- A highly diverse Executive Branch with conflicting loyalties and constituency groups, inside and outside
- A klieg-light atmosphere--public scrutiny and the press
- The built-in inefficiencies of the messy, institutional system guaranteeing not too much power to any one organization or person
- The consequences of this kind of system for political appointees who want to get action going

-2-

STEP 1 (con'd)

2. The coordination needed

- No one Department or agency "in charge" of the big problems--national security, energy, tax policy, unemployment--which slop over all Departmental and agency lines
- The Administration's established coordination mechanisms, e.g.
 - . The cabinet
 - . OMB (budget and legislation)
 - . White House staff (policy)
 - . Other Executive Office units (CEA, NSC, OSTR, OSTP)

3. The importance of relations with Congress

- The Administration's rules and principles for working with the Congress
- The role of the White House Congressional Relations Office and of Departmental offices

4. Dealing with the press

5. A word about intergovernmental relations

6. Systems for managing people

- Hiring non-career subordinates--role of White House clearance
- The career systems of government
 - . Several independent ones (Foreign Service, FBI, CIA, etc.)
 - . The SES system--hiring, merit protection, performance evaluation, bonuses, transferring, firing
 - . Other aspects of the Civil Service Reform Act--merit pay, employee unions, Merit Systems Protection Board

7. Relations with career executives

- Different attitudes and time perspectives
- Their resource as "institutional memory"
- Their need for communications re the Administration's goals and objectives
- Establishing a supportive/cooperative relationship

8. Some legal questions

- Ethics

-3-

STEP 1 (con'd)

- Conflict of interest
- Freedom of Information Act
- Privacy Act
- Administrative Procedures Act

Final Remarks

Session presentations should provide opportunity for questions from participants and some discussion at relevant points.

A hand-out listing pertinent readings should be made available (e.g. NAPA Study of Presidential Management, Heclo's A Government of Strangers).

STEP 2

Departmental/Agency Briefings
to Foster Political-Career Communications

Objective

The objective of Step 2 is to assist new political appointees to assume effective leadership--as rapidly as possible--in their specific responsibility areas by:

- Familiarizing them with present Department/agency organization, programs, initiatives, processes, and procedures
- Providing them with the opportunity to convey their philosophy, goals, and priorities to their career staffs
- Starting the process of developing an effective working relationship between political and career executives based on mutual understanding, respect, and open communications.

Method

In implementation of the White House directive regarding briefings, each Department and agency is to plan and conduct its own series of briefings in which all of its new political appointees and the career executives jointly participate.

Recommended Features

While the particular details regarding size of briefing groups, organizational composition, place, and timing, etc., will necessarily vary depending upon such factors as the Department/agency's size, geographic dispersion, rate of accession of new appointees; all briefing programs would be expected to follow certain basic guidelines:

Convenor: Under the auspices of the Department/agency head, a senior staff member would be charged with this specific responsibility.

Briefers: Various Department/agency political and career staff members plus outside resource persons--depending upon the specific topics being covered (as indicated below).

Place: Preferably facilities away from Department/agency headquarters, conducive to uninterrupted group discussion.

Time: For each briefing program, three to four one-half day sessions running over a two-week period (or 1½-2 consecutive days)--depending upon Department/agency size and program complexity. The briefings would begin as soon as new political appointees arrive, and be repeated as often as necessary as additional appointments are made. (Usually after White House orientation attendance).

Subject Coverage: (in preferred briefing session sequence):

Session 1 - Policies, Programs, Organization

- The Department/agency philosophy, goals, and priorities--presented by the new political leadership in order to provide clear policy direction
- The Department/agency programs, initiatives, budget, staffing, problems, issues, key role players--presented by senior program officials
- The Department/agency organization, support units (function and composition), and key officials (e.g., General Counsel, Inspector General, Administration, Public Affairs, Congressional Relations)--presented by pertinent staff officials

(Biographic descriptions of political and career participants to be provided during this session. Each session to be structured to permit free-flowing discussion).

Session 2 - Roles, Relationship, Communications

- Identification of the respective roles of political and career executives, their relationship, and communications between them. This topic lends itself to a panel discussion with participants from:
 - . the new political leadership
 - . senior career executives
 - . former distinguished career and appointive officials

followed by small-group discussions for surfacing questions and problems. A plenary meeting would then give the new political leadership the opportunity to hear viewpoints regarding past relationship problems and consider ways to develop successful relations and meaningful communications.

Session 3 - Relationships with Congress and Interest Groups

- Description and composition of relevant Congressional committees and sub-committees (authorization, appropriation, and oversight)--problems, issues, personalities, role of staffs
- Identification and description of relationships with major public interest and clientele groups and their key officials--problems and issues
- Description of relationship with the media--do's, any don'ts, internal clearance

(This session conducted by appropriate Department/agency staff officials).

Session 4 - Personnel and Ethics

- Description of Department/agency procedures for implementing SES system including:
 - . Quality Review and Executive Resource Boards
 - . Performance appraisal, bonus, and other award systems
 - . Reassignments, transfers, temporary details, RIF
 - . Discipline and removal
 - . Development/training programs

(Conducted by Department/agency Personnel Office officials, and OPM experts where desired)
- Briefing and discussion by officials from the Office of the General Counsel and the Inspector General regarding the Department/agency's implementation of the:
 - . Unique behavior standards demanded in the public service
 - . Financial disclosure/conflict of interest requirements
 - . Freedom of Information, Privacy, Administrative Procedures, Anti-Deficiency, and Hatch Act provisions;
 - . Inspector General function--do's and don'ts, examples from experience.

STEP 3

Political-Career Relations Workshops
to Build Mutual Understanding of Roles and Perspectives

Objectives

The objective of Step 3 is to provide new political appointees and the career executives an opportunity to develop that increased mutual understanding and respect upon which the establishment of a supportive and cooperative relationship depends.

Method

A continuing series of White House-sponsored political-career executive relations workshops are to be conducted, to cover new senior non-career appointees and career executives in mixed "stranger" groups of about 30-40. Priority in attendance would be given to political executives with little or no previous government experience, and to career executives from Departments/agencies in which significant policy changes are expected to occur.

Experience has shown that:

- Initial relations between political appointees and senior careerists are usually characterized by stereotyped images and misperceptions prevailing on both sides.
- Within the hierarchical organization of Departments/agencies, incentives and opportunities for open communications between political and career executives concerning these mutual preconceptions are generally lacking.
- Absent such discussion, the executives find that their initial climate of suspicion and distrust too often degenerates into near-hostility.
- When groups of political and career executives--drawn from a wide variety of Departments/agencies and thus strangers to each other and not organizationally related--are provided with a setting conducive to facing up to and openly discussing their mutual pre-conceptions, an overwhelming majority of them experience that increased understanding of the respective attitudes and roles upon which they can then develop more cooperative working relations "back home."

Recommended Features

Convenor: A member of the White House staff charged with the specific responsibility of seeing that the program of political-career relations workshops is planned and conducted.

Administration: A number of public and non-profit institutions are available to be called upon for the actual program design and execution.

Place: Facilities away from the Departments/agencies, conducive to uninterrupted group discussions.

Time: For each workshop, 1-1½ days. The workshop schedule would begin shortly after a number of Departments/agencies had completed their internal briefing sessions (Step 2).

Format and Design

1. Each workshop group of 30-40 political and career executives (in an approximate equal ratio) is drawn from a wide variety of Departments/agencies so that the participants are strangers to each other.
2. The 1-1½ day workshop consists of:
 - An introductory speech by a senior non-career official, who provides his/her interpretation of the goals of the Administration and the role to be played by career executives
 - Identification of mutual perceptions and images by the participants (divided into separate small groups of political and career executives)
 - Sharing of the mutual images, leading to an open discussion of respective political-career perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives
 - Analysis and discussion of an assigned policy/administrative problem case by the participants (divided into mixed small groups of political and career executives)
 - Sharing of problem analyses, leading to joint problem solving and discussion of reasons for differing political and career executives viewpoints
 - Concluding remarks by a distinguished former senior career official based on experience at the political-career interface
 - Approximately 40 percent of the total workshop time devoted to "social" activity (coffee breaks, meals, introductory or concluding reception) and the opportunity for individual interactions
 - Each workshop facilitated and evaluated by a representative of the administering institution.

STEP 4

Guidance for Career Executives

(whenever political executives change)

Objective

The objective of Step 4 is to provide guidance to career executives on what they can do to be ready to extend professional support and develop a cooperative working relationship whenever the arrival of new political appointees is anticipated.

Method

A set of written guidelines (appearing below) is available for distribution to those members of the four federal executive associations who find themselves affected by a change in political leadership. White House and Department/agency endorsement of this preparatory activity by career executives will be helpful.

Guidelines

As a career executive anticipating a change in political superiors, you do not have to sit and wait for the attendant uncertainties to be resolved. New political appointees need and should get prompt and effective professional support. You can prepare yourself--physically and psychologically--better to fulfill this commitment if you take certain actions which should help to dispel any initial mutual suspicions and speed the adjustment to the new working relationship.

These actions include the following:

1. Gather information about the new appointees. News releases and other published materials will inform you of their past experience and interests, and may lead you to additional contact sources.
2. Inform yourself of the policies and programs the new appointees are likely to promote. Campaign platforms and literature, speeches and statements by the President and Cabinet officers, and published articles by the appointees are essential preparatory material.
3. Prepare programmatic, written briefing material for the new appointees. Whether handed to them or used by you in a meeting, this material should contain the concise, lucid, and objective facts about your programs--strengths and limitations--as well as a concluding list of the major program issues.
4. Develop a list of program objectives in anticipation of a discussion with the new appointees. This list should:
 - . Include substantive and important objectives most likely to be supported by the new political leadership

-2-

STEP 4 (con'd)

- . Be long enough to cover the new appointees' range of interests and short enough to be achievable during their term of office
 - . Present long-term objectives in a way that progress can be identified in the short term
 - . Include objectives for reducing programs if the new appointees have a mandate for doing so
 - . Avoid listing the objectives in order of your priority--but be prepared to do so if asked
5. Obtain a meeting with the new political appointee. As reactions are given to your briefing material and program objectives:
- . Listen carefully
 - . Be prepared to elaborate
 - . Learn about the new objectives and priorities
 - . Offer to "try again" based on the explicit or implied direction you perceived
6. Learn about and adjust to the management style of the new appointees. You will soon know whether one-on-one contacts or staff meetings are preferred. It is more important that your behavior encourages the development of some trust and confidence in the working relationship than that it reflects your own ideas of "good management."
7. Be patient, honest, and open--but also cautious. "Say it all," but explain it as fully as possible. New appointees may not be aware that career (and political) executives are under constraints unique to the federal government, so that what is meant as simply information may sound to them like criticism. Always explain the "why's and wherefore's" when stating what is in the interest of the appointee--but do state it, and in the context of a normal conversation without sounding like a lecturer.
8. Help the personnel in your programs adapt to and implement change. Keep them informed of changes you know about, the reasons behind them, and the possible implications. Don't be an alarmist.
9. Risk a little--but also protect yourself. Find ways to develop trust--but recognize that a satisfactory relationship cannot always be established. The worst thing you can do is to pretend that removal from your position can never happen. Ultimately the responsibility of career executives is to carry out the policies and programs of the political leadership. If you find that you cannot do so, be prepared to move.

STEP 5

Agency "Alternative Opinion Channels"
to Encourage Constructively Critical Policy Ideas

Objective

The objective of Step 5 is to get Departments/agencies to establish some type of procedural mechanism which permits the political leadership to receive constructive ideas, which might otherwise not be expressed, from career staff members during the policy-making process.

Method

A statement of principles endorsing agency establishment of "alternative opinion channels" would be issued from the White House and mentioned during the White House-sponsored general orientation programs for non-career appointees (Step 1). Each agency would develop its own specific procedures and terminology, with the four federal executive associations prepared to assist agencies in considering how best to adapt and implement this mechanism--as one of several possible ways--to serve their unique needs.

Nature of Mechanism

1. An "alternative opinion channel":
 - Is a standard procedure for carrying out the agency's business
 - Ensures that a staff member can present top agency officials with alternative policy ideas at all stages of policy-making
 - Encourages such presentations to be offered as constructive criticism
 - Provides a clear-cut official channel for such presentations
 - Provides protection for the staff member using the official channel
2. An "alternative opinion channel" is not:
 - A means for reporting fraud, waste, or abuse
 - Whistle-blowing to the Inspector General
 - A procedure for airing grievances or personal matters
3. The political leadership benefits by:
 - Having access to alternative views that might not otherwise come to their attention

-2-

STEP 5 (con'd)

- Obtaining the constructive involvement of career executives
- Gaining the advantage of contact with the "institutional memory"
- Ensuring an enriched policy process, with careful consideration of alternatives
- Stimulating the agency's innovation and creativity

4. The career executives benefit by:

- Knowing that their experience and commitment are valued
- Having a legitimate route for expressing professional dissent on substantive policy matters
- Knowing that "dissent" will not be equated with "disloyalty"
- Having no need to contemplate "leaking," resigning, or simply hunkering down and keeping quiet

5. This mechanism, termed "Dissent Channel," has been in operation at the State Department since 1972, where detailed procedures for handling messages were issued in a Departmental Notice of May 3. Since then, 122 messages have been sent to Secretaries of State through the Dissent Channel, with a number of these having resulted in policy changes.

In describing the State Department's Dissent Channel, a Department Notice issued in 1979 by then-Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated that:

"The Dissent Channel exists to ensure that principal officers of the Department have access to alternative and dissenting views and recommendations which may not reach them through other channels. For the Dissent Channel to function properly, all personnel must be able to transmit messages promptly and be free of interference or subsequent intimidation from superiors or others who may hold differing views. . . . We welcome and benefit from a range of alternative views, including those conveyed through special channels established by the Secretary. Interference with the Dissent Channel is contrary to policy. . . ."